

To: Joseph Biernat, Chair, Public Safety and Regulatory Services,
Minneapolis City Council

From: James J. Moncur, Director, Licenses & Consumer Services; Bill
Anderson, Deputy Director, Licenses and Consumer Services; and
Robert A. Marotto, Manager, Animal Care and Control Program

Date: September 26, 2002

Re: *Sterilization Deposit Amendment for Impounded Dogs and Cats*

We want to take this opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment requiring a sterilization deposit for lawfully impounded dogs and cats recovered by their owners from the City's Animal Care and Control Center. As the attached amendment to Minneapolis City Ordinance 62.40 (Release from Shelter) shows, the sterilization deposit would be required for intact cats and dogs over six months of age. The deposit would be refunded to the owner if within forty-five days of the date of recovery s/he provided proof from a licensed veterinarian that an animal has been sterilized. If such proof is not provided, the sterilization deposit would be forfeited.

Attached is the budget target strategy for introducing the sterilization deposit. This strategy was formulated given the demand for and costs of providing animal care and control services. The sterilization deposit amendment is formulated such that the Director of Licenses and Consumer Services is authorized to set this fee. The fee initially would be set at \$40.

One reason for this fee is the need to cover the real and significant costs of the animal care and control services required by the unwanted reproduction of dogs and cats in neighborhoods throughout the City. These include field service responses to complaints about various neighborhood nuisance issues involving cats and dogs, and the operation of the City's Animal Care and Control Center where impounded animals are sheltered. Another reason for the \$40 fee is that in other communities that have already introduced an amendment requiring a sterilization deposit fees are often set at or above \$50. These fees are reviewed in the attached overview of recent developments in this area (which shows that some communities are actually requiring recovered animals to be sterilized).

It is the actual and potential benefits of sterilization that justify the adoption of the amendment under consideration. They are the reason why local governments are increasingly adopting ordinances to control the reproduction of unwanted pets. These benefits (which are discussed in greater detail in the attached overview) include:

- Reduced numbers of dogs and cats that must be sheltered and then euthanized because they cannot be placed in homes.
- Greater control over the costs for animal care and control services including the impoundment of stray animals and their sheltering for a mandated time period.
- More effective control of neighborhood nuisance problems involving pets.
- More effective protection against dog bites since available data indicates that intact dogs are much more likely than sterilized ones to bite a person.

In closing, it deserves to be mentioned that just a few weeks ago the United States Postal Service issued the attached spay/neuter stamps featuring a puppy named "Kirby" and a kitten named "Samantha." As is the case with the amendment under consideration, this is part of the ongoing effort to promote responsible pet ownership and thereby effectively combat the problem of pet overpopulation in our communities and country.